THE NIGHTMARE BEFORE CHRISTMAS

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FADE IN:

PROLOGUE

CLOSE ON:

AN OLD-FASHIONED CALENDAR,

the kind that used to hang in offices in the forties. Each day is a tear-off page. The dates are printed in bold black lettering.

The pages of days of the year zip off -- at a rate faster than the eye can really register. The impression should be of time whizzing by...

Over this, SANTA CLAUS narrates....

SANTA (V.O.)
'Twas a long time ago, quite a bit to be fair
In a place that I'm sure you are quite unaware.

For our story that you are about to be told
Began in the holiday worlds of old.

Without holidays, goodness, how dull life would be
Without their distraction and pleasure and glee.

The calendar makes a SUDDEN STOP AT

CHRISTMAS.

The calendar page peels back to reveal the first hint of color in the black and white of the year. Smoke curls up from the chimney of a snow-covered cottage in a clearing of a snow-covered pine forest. THE STOP IS ONLY FOR A BEAT.

Then the calendar speeds on.

SANTA (V.O.) (CONT'D)
But our holidays are the result of much fuss
And hard work for the worlds that must make them for us

The calendar STOPS again. This time at

VALENTINE'S DAY.

This stop is short, but longer than the last -- as each subsequent stop will be.

In Valentine-ville, FAT CUPIDS shoot arrows at distant chocolate-dripping hearts: target practice.

SANTA (V.O.) (CONT'D)
See, each holiday town works all year to create
Twenty-four special hours, fantastically great.

Soon the calendar whirls on. Next STOP is

EASTER

where it is spring. CACKLING HENS sit side-by-side on their long row of nests. In unison, choreographed like some ballet, they lay their pre-decorated eggs.

The eggs then drop down a chute and land on a conveyor belt which carries them out of the henhouse and into waiting Easter baskets.

SANTA (V.O.) (CONT'D)
Fleeting twenty-four hours take long to prepare,
A full year of planning and plenty of care.

But now getting back to the story at hand
I should mention THIS POINT about holiday lands --

The calendar flips to the

FOURTH OF JULY.

FIREWORKS.

-- ABE LINCOLN fires a cannon. The cannonball explodes mid-air, showering down the word, "HAPPY."

-- BETSY ROSS uses a SPARKLER to write the word, "FOURTH."

George Washington

-- PAUL REVERE sets off the first of six rockets. Rocket #1 erupts into an "O." #2 traces an "F" -- together they read "OF." Rocket #3 won't light. Neither will #4, #5, or #6. Paul Revere panicks.

But PAUL REVERE'S HORSE saves the day. He kicks off his horseshoes -- shooting them at the side of a wooden fence. As they hit the boards each becomes a letter: "J," "U," "L," "Y."

SANTA (V.O.) (CONT'D)
For each one, way back when, was alas unaware
Of the others' existence, now I've said it -- so there!

The calendar pages tear on, slowing at October 29, slowing more at, and stopping at the 31st.

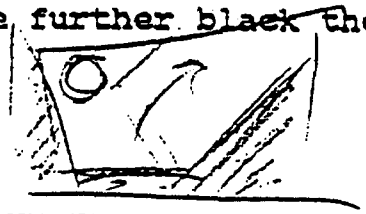
SANTA (V.O.) (CONT'D)
But once there occurred a calamity SO GREAT!
When two of the worlds did collide by mistake...

The October 31st page peels back to... nothing. To BLACK. We fall in, or perhaps it should feel more like we're swallowed up.

TITLE SEQUENCE.

Carved JACK O'LANTERNS come at us in the long tunnel of darkness. Collision seems inevitable, but in the instant before we would slam into them, the jack o'lanterns veer off, turning to display the various credits on their uncarved backsides.

When the last jack o'lantern zooms toward us, it doesn't veer off. It keeps coming and fast. Rather than collide with it though -- we fall straight into one of the PUMPKINHEAD'S CARVED-OUT, TRIANGULAR EYES into the further black there and out...



A CRYPT DOOR

which opens onto the

EXT. HALLOWEENLAND CEMETERY. NIGHT.

The bloated orange disk of the MOON illuminates Halloweenland's delicately decrepit graveyard.

REVERSE ON PUMPKINHEAD,

giant jack o'lantern head now set on the squat vines of his many leafy legs. He looks more like a spider than like anything else as he scuttles across the cemetery toward the big pumpkin patch.

>>>>> *THIS IS HALLOWEEN*

PUMPKINHEAD
Boys and Girls of every age
Wouldn't you like to see something strange?
Come with us and you will see...
This our town of Halloween!

Pumpkinhead has reached the

PUMPKIN PATCH

where he drops down among his fellow pumpkins -- who all wake up at once -- sudden jack o'lantern mouths and eyes glowing wide for the chorus...

PUMPKIN PATCH CHORUS
This is Halloween, this is Halloween!
Pumpkins scream in the dead of night --
This is Halloween, everybody make a scene
Trick or treat 'til the neighbors gonna die of fright

EXT. HALLOWEEN TOWN. NIGHT/CONTINUOUS TIME.

Beyond the graveyard lies the little city of odd expressionist angles and the morbid extravaganza of Gothic manses.

PUMPKIN PATCH CHORUS (V.O.) (CONT'D)
It's our town. Everybody scream
In this town of Halloween...

We swoop down the street, through the creaky iron gate of a...

EXT. DESERTED GOTHIC MANSE. NIGHT/CONTINUOUS TIME.

We enter THROUGH A BROKEN, COBWEB-CLOGGED WINDOW into...

INT. DESERTED GOTHIC MANSE. NIGHT/CONTINUOUS TIME.

Many CREATURES hide in the shadows of this creepy house. The camera finds them...

CREATURE #1
I am the one hiding under your bed,
Teeth ground sharp and eyes glowing red.

CREATURE #2
I am the one hiding under your stairs
Fingers like snakes and spiders in my hair.

IN THE MANSE'S DECAYED PARLOR,

every item of furniture that could conceivably serve as a coffin springs open -- the grandfather clock, the window seat, the sofa, the chaise longe, the hearth rug (covering a trap door), the drawers of a sideboard and out pop

CORPSES.

The Corpses sit bolt upright and heartily sing:

CHORUS OF CORPSES
This is Halloween, this is Halloween,
Halloween...(etc)

THE MANSE'S FALLING DOWN FRONT HALL

is tenuously illuminated by a tarantula chandelier which clings to the ceiling overhead and lowers and rises according to the whims of its web.

FOUR BIG VAMPIRES

lumber in from the dark, slanty hallways that fan off the entrance hall. They march in and, in formation, march OUT THE FRONT DOOR onto the ruins of--

EXT. WORM-ROTTED FRONT PORCH. NIGHT/CONTINUOUS TIME

The Vampires' bodies are huge, but their heads are small like insect heads and the voices that come out of heads are little, squeaky and high.

VAMPIRES
In this town, we call home,
Everyone hail to the pumpkin song!

As they sing they march down the rickety steps. Out on the--

EXT. STREET. NIGHT/CONTINUOUS TIME.

A HEARSE passes the Manse. Riding on top is the corpulent MAYOR of Halloweenland. Not surprisingly, he's a TWO-FACED SORT OF GUY, revealed as each of his faces sings a line:

MAYOR
In this town, don't we love it now
Everybody's waiting for the next surprise.

While the hearse turns a

CORNER

and glides past an ALLEY we hear a GRAVELLY VOICE:

GRAVELLY VOICE
'Round that corner, man,
Hiding in a trashcan
Something's waiting now to pounce and how you'll--

The lid flies off of a trashcan and out pops the GRAVELLY-VOICED TRASHCAN-DWELLING MONSTER. He's fat and slimy and grotesque.

GRAVELLY-VOICED TRASHCAN-DWELLING MONSTER
--Scream! This is Halloween,
Red 'n black, slimy green...
Aren't you scared? Well, that's just fine!

WITCHES speed toward us on their brooms -- zipping out of the alley.

WITCHES
Say it once, say it twice,
Take the chance and roll the dice
Ride with the moon in the dead of night (oh)

At the street, the witches fan out and swoop past the

HANGING TREE,

a gigantic oak with SEVERAL HANGED MEN dangling from its broad, outspread branches.

The hanging tree itself sings:

HANGING TREE
Everybody scream, everybody scream
In our town of Halloween.

The hanged men suddenly revive:

HANGED MEN
This is Halloween, This is Halloween...

EXT. ANOTHER STREET. NIGHT.

A LUMPEN-LOOKING LONG-HAIRED WOMAN IN HEELS hurries away down a tortuously windy street. This is SALLY. For now, we see only her backside, her waist-length hair.

Behind her, and closer to us, a GHOUL tips into view to demonstrate his particular talent:

GHOUL
I am the guy with the tearaway face...

Sally hesitates, listening.

GHOUL (CONT'D)
Here in a flash and gone without a trace.

Sally is about to turn around, but as the ghoul vanishes, she hesitates.

In a moment, a SECOND GHOUL sets upon her -- this one more gruesome than the last.

SECOND GHOUL
I am the who when you call --

This ghoul is closer, louder and Sally does turn around now -- revealing that she's a crudely stitched together Bride Of Frankenstein Rag Doll. Her balance is precarious. Her arms flop. Her mouth is a tragic slash. She has a quavering, little voice:

SALLY
-- Who's there?

But the second ghoul has disappeared before she sees him. Only his voice remains...

SECOND GHOUL'S VOICE
I am the wind blowing through your hair.

Invisible fingers lift Sally's long hair. It is with pathetic eagerness that she looks around for whomever is responsible for this.

A THIRD GHOUL

springs into view, then bounces skyward. With a very disappointed Sally (she's sorry he's leaving), we watch him go up into...

EXT. SKY. NIGHT/CONTINUOUS TIME.

The Third Ghoul seems to reach the moon.

THIRD GHOUL
I am the shadow on the moon at night,
filling your dreams to the brim with fright.

As the Third Ghoul passes the orange disk of the moon,

BATS

flap out from behind it. They sing with the Third Ghoul...

THIRD GHOUL AND BATS
This is Halloween, This is Halloween
HALLOWEEN! HALLOWEEN!

The bats flutter off and the Third Ghoul falls back toward the ground. He lands...

EXT. HALLOWEEN TOWN SQUARE. NIGHT/CONTINUOUS TIME.

As he hits the ground, the Third Ghoul shatters, breaking apart into several pieces -- globular and doughy GELATINOUS LUMPS, each a separate little creature. When they sing, they have very high voices:

GELATINOUS LUMPS
Tender Lumplings everywhere
Life's no fun without a good scare.

Over the crest of the hill, behind the town square,

THE CORPSES

march into view, flanking the MAYOR'S HEARSE.

CORPSES
That's our job, but we're not mean
In our town of Halloween.

Behind the corpses come the VAMPIRES.

CORPSES AND VAMPIRES
In this town --

The MAYOR

blares out his message through a P.A. SYSTEM on the hearse.

MAYOR
-- don't we love it now?
Everyone's waiting for the next surprise.

The WITCHES come next...

MAYOR, CORPSES, VAMPIRES, WITCHES
Skeleton Jack might catch you in the back and
Scream --

The Gelatinous Lumps instantly reassemble to form the Third Ghoul.

THIRD GHOUL
-- like a banshee make you jump --

The Third Ghoul immediately bounces out of sight again...

SALLY

stumbles into view, still hurrying. She sings with everyone else...

MAYOR, CORPSES, VAMPIRES, WITCHES, SALLY
-- out of your SKIN!
This is Halloween, --

SALLY

excitedly spots someone coming -- though he's still out of view for us:

SALLY
-- Everyone scream, won't ya
Please make way for a special guy...

THE OTHERS

turn to look.

MAYOR, CORPSES, VAMPIRES, WITCHES, SALLY
Our man Jack is --

SALLY
-- King of the Pumpkin Patch.

MAYOR, CORPSES, VAMPIRES, WITCHES, SALLY
Everyone hail to the Pumpkin King now.

They part to make way for

JACK SKELLINGTON, THE PUMPKIN KING,

astride his SKELTON HORSE, boots set backwards in the stirrups as is done for the honored dead. Jack is tall, long-limbed and bone-thin. He is formally attired, and wears an elegant bat bow-tie.

Sally gapes tragically at Jack. But he rides right past without noticing her.

Accompanying Jack are most of the CREATURES AND MONSTERS we've met, the various inhabitants of Halloweenland. Everyone else falls in behind Jack -- including a stumbling, almost-left-behind-gawking Sally.

EVERYONE
This is Halloween, THIS IS HALLOWEEN (etc.)

THE HANGING TREE

hurries to join the parade. He brings up the rear. The HANGED MEN bobble on their ever-tightening nooses, their tongues and eyes popping out.

The tighter nooses make the Hanged Men's voices reed-thin and high -- contrasting to the enormous Hanging Tree's lone *basso profundo*:

HANGING TREE and HANGED MEN
In this place we call home
Everyone hail to the Pumpkin Song

LATER:

Jack Skellington is demonstrative and very excitable with highs that are extraordinarily high and lows that are unusually low.

Right now he is surrounded by his ADMIRERS -- the witches in particular fawn over him. Jack seems eager to please everyone, but, at the same time, a bit anxious to get on with it.

JACK
Thank you!

Sally watches him longingly from the edge of the circle.

MAYOR
Oh, Jack, you are such a scream!
(turns to the assembly)
Isn't he?

The assembly agrees.

ASSEMBLY
Yes, he is!

VAMPIRE
You make sparks fly, Jack.

WITCH #1
You make oil boil.

WITCH #2
You make rats shriek.

JACK
I <u>love</u> that.

WITCH #3
You make flesh crawl...

The three witches try to outdo one another.

WITCH #3
(quickly adds)
...And wounds suppurate.

JACK
Thank you, thank you, thank you very much!

The last witch glares triumphantly at her cronies.

THIRD GHOUL
What an inspiration to everybody!

SALLY
(echoes)
An inspiration...

CORPSE
It was our most horrific Halloween ever!

Sally sighs and starts to drift irresistibly toward Jack. Throughout, rag doll Sally gains substance as she gains conviction -- this is her first baby step toward that, not even perceptible, but in any case RUDELY INTERRUPTED BY --

THE EVIL SCIENTIST

who created her. He takes ahold of her by one of her stitched-together arms.

EVIL SCIENTIST
The deadly nightshade you slipped me wore off, Sally... I thought I'd find you here....

SALLY
No!

Sally pulls back, trying to wriggle free of the scientist's grasp.

SALLY
Let go!

But he doesn't.

SALLY
Have it then if you must!

With her other hand, she quickly and deftly rips out the stitches that attach her arm to the rest of her ... THEN RIPS THE ARM CLEAR OUT OF ITS SOCKET.

SHE LEAVES THE DOCTOR HOLDING IT WHILE SHE RUNS OFF into the the crowd, determined to elude the Evil Scientist. She disappears into the gloom in the direction of the cemetery.

Shaking her torn-off arm, the Evil Scientist calls after her:

EVIL SCIENTIST
You'll be back. Sooner or later you'll need this.

JACK

continues to congratulate and be congratulated by the various citizens of Halloweenland. The Mayor interjects, looking for attention--

MAYOR
Next year'll even be better, you'll see.

HORRIFIC-LOOKING CREATURE
Do you really think so, Jack?

JACK
Of course I do. It always is, isn't it?

VARIOUS MONSTERS
Always.

MAYOR
We'll have to get on it immediately. No time for sitting around smugly.

ASSORTED MONSTERS
That's so true... We've got a lot of work ahead of us.

MORE MONSTERS
Goodnight, everybody!
Goodnight, Jack!

The assembly breaks up. Jack turns to leave but his path is blocked by A COUPLE OF ADORABLY HIDEOUS KID MONSTERS

COUPLE OF KID MONSTERS
(plead)
Just one more time, Jack!

Jack rattles his bones once more for the kids. They shriek a gleeful shriek and scamper off.

AT THE CORNER OF THE TOWN SQUARE,

Jack passes a STREET BAND -- fellow skeletons down on their luck: an ACCORDION PLAYER, A SAX PLAYER, AND A VIOLINIST. He tosses a coin into their hat. Playing, they nod their thanks.

CUT TO:

EXT. CEMETERY. NIGHT/LATER.

Utterly dejected, Sally crouches behind a tombstone. She hugs herself with her remaining arm.

THE SUDDEN SOUND OF SOMEONE APPROACHING (O.S.)

makes her freeze. She dares to peek over the top of the tombstone to see who it is --

IT'S JACK.

The sight of him immediately comforts her.

SALLY
Oh... it's Jack... Look at him -- he's so alive... So happy... He's so filled with confidence he could teach the wolves to howl!

Sally lets out a little whimper of self-pity and collapses out of sight behind the tombstone to feel sorry for herself...

SALLY
He'll never notice me. Why would he? Why should he?

Sally hugs herself again -- as best she can with her one arm.

JACK

makes his way past the markers and mausoleums. He looks around and, since Sally is hidden behind the tombstone, he doesn't see anyone. He starts the long climg up Cemetery Ridge as he sings:

>>>>> *JACK'S LAMENT*

JACK
There are few who'd deny, at what I do I am the best
For my talents are renowned far and wide
When it comes to surprises in the moon-lit night,
I excel without ever even trying.

With the slightest little effort of my ghost-like charms
I have seen grown men give out a shriek
With the wave of my hand, and a well-placed moan,
I have swept the very bravest off their feet.

Jack pauses a moment, as if letting these facts settle in, then heaves a huge sigh and sags miserably.

Jack's ghost dog, ZERO, rises out of his grave, floats over to Jack and circles around him. Trying to comfort his beloved master, he drapes himself over Jack's shoulder and lays a sympathetic head on him.

Hunched over with sorrow, Jack drags his bones on up the desolate hill.

JACK
Yet year after year, it's the same routine
And I grow so weary of the sound of screams
And I, Jack, the PUMPKIN KING!
Have grown so tired of the same old thing....

Zero drifts sadly to the ground, and flattens faithfully beside his master -- only his shiny little jack o'lantern nose on the end of his pointy snout sticks up.

Jack tragically reaches the crest of the long hill. Zero follows, dragging along the ground after him.

JACK
Oh somewhere deep inside of these bones
An emptiness began to grow
There's something out there far from my home
A longing that I've never known
... I've never known.

Jack gazes hopelessly out over Halloweenland.

BEHIND HER TOMBSTONE,

Sally can't believe what she's hearing. She peeks, but hides again. She listens breathlessly as

JACK

I'm a master of fright, and a demon of light
And I'll scare you right out of your pants, boy
To a guy in Kentucky, I'm Mister Unlucky
And I'm known throughout England and France, boy

And since I am dead, I can take off my head
To recite Shakespearian quotations
No animal or man can scream like I can
With the fury of my recitations.

But who here would ever understand
That the Pumpkin King with the skeleton grin
Would tire of his crown -- if they only understood
He would give it all up if he only could
... if he only could

SALLY'S

heart goes out to Jack. She had no idea he felt this way, no idea of his tragic side. She wants to show him that he's not as alone as he thinks, that she understands him. But she's timid -- should she come out from behind the tombstone? Dare she dare? Should she? Shouldn't she?

JACK

Oh, there's an empty place in my bones
That calls out for something unknown
The fame and praise, come year after year,
Does nothing for these empty tears
... these empty tears....

JACK

heads off with Zero, staggering away blind in his misery, while...

SALLY,

still crouched behind the tombstone, continues to debate with herself...

Jack has left the cemetery and disappeared from sight when she finally screws up her courage and pops up full of determination and shouts:

SALLY

JACK! I KNOW YOU HARDLY KNOW ME, BUT --

He isn't there to hear her... Shocked and disappointed, Sally's rag doll body goes floppy again.

Her voice gets high and tiny... then trails off, almost tearfully...

SALLY (CONT'D)
-- I feel the same way you do...

Sally stares sadly into the empty spot Jack so recently occupied, then turns and hobbles limply away. She stops at a

WEED-CHOKED AND DESICCATED LITTLE HERB GARDEN

set beside a cluster of tombstones at the edge of the graveyard. The herbs growing there are labelled: "Henbane," "Witch Hazel," "Deadly Night Shade."

As best she can with her single arm, Sally gathers fresh sprigs of Deadly Night Shade.

CUT TO:

EXT. WILDERNESS. NIGHT/LATER.

Lost in his private tragedy, Jack lurches heedlessly forward. Looking around confused -- they've never been here before -- Zero floats quickly after, hurrying to catch up. Whimpering, he bites Jack's coattails and pulls -- trying his best to get Jack to stop, to turn around...

JACK
No, Zero.

Jack pulls free.

Trying again, Zero grabs Jack by the leg, wrapping his mouth around Jack's skinny shin bone.

JACK
No. No playing today, Zero...
I'm just not in the mood.

Zero lets go and Jack marches wretchedly forward.

CUT TO:

INT. EVIL SCIENTIST'S HOUSE. KITCHEN. NIGHT/LATER.

CLOSE ON:

AN EMPTY JAR MARKED "DEADLY NIGHT SHADE."

SALLY

drops in the fresh sprigs of the herb.

EVIL SCIENTIST (O.S.)
Sally?

Alarmed, Sally screws the lid back on -- as quickly as she can with only one arm -- and hides the jar at the back of a cabinet.

THE EVIL SCIENTIST

is a twisted silhouette in the doorway behind Sally.

EVIL SCIENTIST
You came back.

Gasping guiltily, Sally spins around.

SALLY
Yes.

EVIL SCIENTIST
For this.

He holds up Sally's torn-off arm -- as well as a large shiny needle threaded with a long strand of thread.

SALLY
Yes.

EVIL SCIENTIST
Didn't I tell you? I'm always right, you know, my dear... Aren't I?

SALLY
Yes.

Smiling his mad grin, the scientist gestures into the room behind him.

EVIL SCIENTIST
Shall we?

He makes way for Sally.

After a beat, Sally nods. Resigned, she trudges past him.

He jauntily follows her.

CUT TO:

INT. EVIL SCIENTIST'S LABORATORY. NIGHT/LATER.

The Evil Scientist carefully sews Sally's arm back on -- evenso the stitches are crude and the fit awkward. The expression on her face is more tragic than ever.

EVIL SCIENTIST
You're mine, you know. I made you.

SALLY
I know.

EVIL SCIENTIST
If you went away, what would become of me?

SALLY
I'm grown up now. I have to leave some time.

EVIL SCIENTIST
Of course you do, and I want you to... but there's no need to hurry it along, is there?

SALLY
I can't help it.

EVIL SCIENTIST
That's twice this month you've slipped Deadly Night Shade into my tea and run off. People might get the wrong idea and think you're unhappy at home.

Sally whimpers sadly.

EVIL SCIENTIST
I do the best I can to make it comfortable for us here.

SALLY
I know.

EVIL SCIENTIST
But I guess my best just isn't good enough.

As anxious as she is to be away from here, Sally can't bear the thought of hurting anybody and instinctively tries to make him feel better.

SALLY
That's not true. It's a beautiful home, wonderfully comfortable... I'm indebted to you for everything... It's just...

EVIL SCIENTIST
Just what?

SALLY
Just me, I suppose... I'm restless. I can't help it.

The scientist smiles, feeling Sally under his sway again. He pats her consolingly, then finishes sewing on her arm and makes an elaborate knot at the end of his stitches. He snips the thread and puts away his sewing kit.

EVIL SCIENTIST
It's a phase, my dear. It'll pass. We need to be patient, that's all.

Sally heaves a big sigh.

SALLY
That's all....

She looks off tragically. Outside, it's sunrise.

CUT TO:

EXT. FOREST. DAWN.

Still bowed by the depth of his despair, unaware of time, or distance, or anything, Jack wanders through the gloom of the forest. Zero floats protectively at his side.

Suddenly, Jack is stabbed by a ray of light from the rising sun.

JACK
Ow!

Cringing, he stops in his tracks. When he dares to look around him, it is as though he has just been woken up from a dream.

JACK
Where am I?

JACK
Zero! Where are we? We've never been here, have we, boy?

Jack takes a few steps one direction and looks curiously, then a few steps in another direction and looks -- and looks.

JACK
It's some place new.

Zero circles Jack, whirling him around, trying to aim him back toward home. But Jack resists. He wants to see whatever there is to see.

He proceeds deeper into the woods.

CUT TO:

EXT. JACK'S TOWER. DAY.

The Mayor's hearse pulls up in front of Jack's tower. The Mayor climbs out, arms brimming with blueprints and plans. He struts to Jack's door -- his self-confident face on -- and bangs the knocker.

MAYOR
Jack?!

He waits for an answer. There isn't any. Even this little bit of suspense brings out the Mayor's other face -- this one is scared, self-doubting.

MAYOR
Jack?! You home?!

There's still no answer.

The mayor squints out into the street. Clearing his throat, he barks confidently at PASSERS-BY:

MAYOR
(to various passers-by)
Have you seen Jack?... Have you seen Jack?...

But nobody has. He doesn't bother to ask the Street Band set up across the street.

The mayor's bravado face evaporates and the whiny one takes over.

MAYOR
Where is he? We had an appointment.

His blustery face back on, the Mayor shouts up to Jack's room at the top of the tower.

MAYOR
Jack?! I've got the plans for next year! See?!

He holds up the blueprints and plans he carries.

MAYOR
I need to go over them with you so we can get started! Halloween'll be here again in no time! Three hundred and sixty odd days fly by too fast!

The Mayor's faces alternate in progressively rapid succession as panic sets in.

MAYOR
(shouts desperately)
Jack! Please! I'm only an elected official here! I can't make decisions! Jack! Answer me!

Ruined, the Mayor crumples.

The ACCORDION PLAYER of the Street Band says quietly from across the street:

ACCORDION PLAYER
He can't.

The Mayor looks up.

MAYOR
Why not?

ACCORDION PLAYER
He's not home.

MAYOR
Where is he?

ACCORDION PLAYER
He hasn't been home all night.

The Mayor tries to rouse himself, but he's shorted out, exhausted...

MAYOR
(feebly)
Oh...

He drops again to the sidewalk.

CUT TO:

EXT. EVIL SCIENTIST'S HOUSE. DAY/LATER.

Sally peers out of an upper-storey window -- expression eager and despairing at once.

CUT TO:

INT. FOREST. DUSK.

It is just before night. Jack strides forward toward a

DISTANT PUMPKIN SHAPE

that seems to be carved out of the dark and outlined by glowing light.

Jack can't wait to find out what it means, but Zero, warier than his master and far less enthusiastic about this adventure, lags behind.

Arriving at the Pumpkin Shape, Jack eagerly reaches out to it. When he touches it, it gives -- CREAKING OPEN to more woods beyond. It's a DOOR.

Zero hurries to catch up as Jack steps through the Pumpkin-shaped Door and out into a

CLEARING

in this next forest. Awed, Jack stops dead in the middle of the clearing and gapes at what he sees -- there are

MORE DOORWAYS

etched into the trunks of the trees that ring the clearing. To us, these doorways make sense -- one is shaped like an EASTER EGG, another like a FIRECRACKER, another like a VAKENTINE, another like a SHAMROCK, and another like a CHRISTMAS TREE. To Jack, who's never heard of the other holidays, these doorways are a total mystery.

He is especially TRANSFIXED by the

CHRISTMAS TREE-SHAPED DOOR.

It rattles invitingly on its hinges. Gusts of cold air blow out from behind it. Snow oozes out beneath. The drama of it draws Jack closer.

Zero hesitates in the Pumpkin-shaped doorway, uneasy about crossing through it to the other side -- but the sight of Jack, striding resolutely toward the Christmas Tree-shaped door, makes him swoop quickly after.

Using all his strength, Jack wrenches open the Christmas Tree-shaped door. There is a moment's delay -- darkness, stillness, silence -- then the instantaneous fury of a

HOWLING BLIZZARD.

A quick blast of snow knocks Zero clear back through the Pumpkin-shaped doorway.

The whipping winter wind curls around Jack's frail bones and SUCKS HIM IN THROUGH THE OPEN DOOR. Jack disappears. The Christmas Tree-shaped door SLAMS SHUT.

After a beat:

Zero pokes his head up over the lintel of the Pumpkin-shaped doorway and sees that Jack has vanished. Panic-stricken, he streaks across the clearing to the closed Christmas Tree door.

Crying, he scratches on the door, tries to squeeze under it (his vaporous body is easy, but his head and jack o'lantern nose are another matter), circles the tree, investigates for another entrance (above, below, every which way). He tries everything in his ghost-dog powers to get in -- but all in vain. He has no choice but to wait. Ears cocked, he settles down to stare and stare at the strange door that swallowed his master....

CUT TO:

THE WHIRLING, SNOW-SWIRLING TUNNEL OF BLACKNESS

through which Jack FALLS. The fall abruptly ends. BLACK.

CUT TO:

EXT. CHRISTMASTOWN. NIGHT.

Jack sits up in the snow bank where he has landed. He looks excitedly around. He marvels first at the miracle of snow.

>>>>> *WHAT'S THIS?*

JACK
What's this? What's this?
There's color everywhere... What's this?
There's white things in the air... What's this?
I can't believe my eyes I must be dreaming,
Wake up, Jack, this isn't fair... What's this?

He cavorts excitedly in the snow, slipping and sliding and finally tumbling down a hill into the center of Christmastown. He springs up, shakes himself off, and enthusiastically explores the snow-blanketed village.

JACK (CONT'D)
What's this? What's this?
There's something very wrong... What's this?
There're people singing songs... What's this?
The streets are lined with
Little creatures laughing,
Everybody seems so happy,
Have I possibly gone daffy...?
What is this...? What's this?

There're children throwing snowballs
Here instead of throwing heads.
They're busy building toys
And absolutely no one's dead.

Here in Christmastown, every tree is a Christmas tree and each house is shinier and more beautifully decorated than the next.

JACK (CONT'D)
There's frost on every window,
Oh, I can't believe my eyes,
And in my bones I feel a warmth
That's coming from inside...

Jack peeks into warmly-lighted homes... Jack uses his consummate Halloween trickster skills to see without being seen...

JACK (CONT'D)
Oh, look, what's this?
They're hanging mistletoe... They kiss --
Why that looks so unique... Inspired!
They're gathering around to hear a story,
Roasting chestnuts on a fire... What's this?

What's this? In here
They've got a little tree... how queer!
And who would ever think... and why?

JACK (CONT'D)
They're covering it with
Tiny little things, they've got
Electric lights on strings, and there's a
Smile on everyone, so now
Correct me if I'm wrong...
This looks like fun,
This looks like fun,
Oh, could it be I got my wish...? What's this?

Jack enters the CHILDRENS' COZY BEDROOM in one house...

JACK (CONT'D)
Oh my, what now?
The children are asleep... But look --
There's nothing underneath... No ghouls
No witches here to scream and scare them
... or ensnare them...
Only cozy little things
Secure inside their dreamland... What's this?

Distracted, Jack goes off to leave the child at whom he has been peering suddenly wide awake and terrified...

Jack is back outside...

JACK (CONT'D)
The monsters are all missing
And the nightmares can't be found
And in their place there seems to be
Good feeling all around...

Instead of screams I swear I can hear
Music in the air.
The smell of cakes and pies
Is absolutely everywhere...

The sights, the sounds,
They're everywhere and all around...
I've never felt so good before...
The empty place inside of me is filling up
I simply cannot get enough.
I want it, oh, I want it...
Oh, I want it for my own.
I've got to know
I've got to know
What is this place that I have found?

WHAT IS THIS???

Jack darts this way and that and runs and runs, trying to get his fill of this strange new wonderful place.

He trips and falls and starts to roll and as he rolls he gathers snow -- he becomes a gigantic snowball barrelling through Christmas town, stopping only when he SLAMS INTO

ONE OF TWO GIGANTIC CANDY CANES...

between which spans a sign. Jack bursts out of his snow ball only to have fresh snow dumped on him which falls from the sign between the two tall candy canes.

Jack shakes himself free of this fresh heap of snow, looks up at the wide welcoming sign:

CHRISTMASTOWN

And thoughtfully reads...

JACK
.... *Christmastown? Hmmmmmmmm.*

Jack studies the town from this distance -- the lights glow heart-warmingly.

JACK
Incredible. I'll need proof...

On his feet again, he slinks quietly back toward Christmastown.

CUT TO:

EXT. HALLOWEEN TOWN SQUARE. DAY.

A number of the worried citizens of Halloweenland have gathered. They chatter among themselves. The MAYOR addresses them from the top of his hearse.

MAYOR
Quiet. Quiet now. We all agree that two days if far too long for Jack to have been gone without warning... Is there anywhere we've forgotten to check?

MONSTER WITH THE TEAR-AWAY FACE
I looked in every mausoleum.

TWO WITCHES
(in unison)
We opened the sarcophagi.

BLIND-FOLDED, EXECUTED MAN
I tromped through the Pumpkin Patch.

VAMPIRE
I peeked behind the Cyclops' eye.

The other citizens wheel around to look at him disbelievingly.

VAMPIRE
(defensively)
I did!...
(then adds sadly)
But he wasn't there...

Everyone sighs.

MAYOR
It's time to sound the alarms...

CUT TO:

INT. EVIL SCIENTIST'S KITCHEN. DAY/LATER

Outside, the alarms wail in the distance while, inside, Sally speedily whips up a pot of sleeping-potion soup.

She keeps looking out the window, hoping for a hint of what's going on, but nothing -- not a clue. Eager to find out, she hurries the soup along...

Various spice jars are out on the counter -- among them, the one labelled "Deadly Night Shade," the entire contents of which she dumps into the pot.

SALLY
(to herself)
Regular dose... Double dose... Double, double dose. He'll be able to smell a double, double dose of Deadly Night Shade... Anybody could.

She studies the other jars and picks the one labelled "Frog's Breath."

SALLY (CONT'D)
Frog's Breath will overpower any smell.

She opens the jar. Recoiling from the odor, she turns aside, trying to escape the fumes as she pours some of the Frog's Breath into the soup -- but it starts to overwhelm her anyway. She swoons. Her knees buckle.

In her swoon, she fumbles blindly among the other jars.

SALLY
(choking)
Sweet Pea... Where's that
Sweet Pea... Too bitter...
Too bitter...

Her hand finally locates the jar labelled, "Sweet Pea."

The Evil Scientist calls from another room:

EVIL SCIENTIST (O.S.)
Sally?

Still choking, hardly able even to squeak out an answer, Sally struggles to open the Sweet Pea jar.

EVIL SCIENTIST (O.S.)
Where's my soup?

Sally finally gets the jar open. As fast as she can, she empties it into the soup and hovers above the pot. In a moment, the Sweet Pea takes effect and Sally's strength begins to return.

SALLY
(gasps)
Coming...

EVIL SCIENTIST (O.S.)
Good. I'm hungry.

Still a bit shaky, Sally reaches for one more jar. The label on this one reads, "Worm's Wart."

SALLY
(hoarsely)
A handful of Worm's Wart just
for distraction. It'll throw
him off the trail for sure...

She drops in some Worm's Wart, stirs the soup, then ladles out a bowlful.

CUT TO:

INT. EVIL SCIENTIST'S LABORATORY. DAY.

The Evil Scientist is at his lab table, peering into a microscope and thinking -- which, for him, involves lifting off the top of his skull and tickling and scrambling the brains inside.

Sally carries in a tray holding his bowl of soup.

SALLY
Lunch.

The scientist impatiently gestures her over. He replaces the top of his skull...

EVIL SCIENTIST
Excellent. Over here. Over here. Set it down.

She gingerly sets the tray in front of him.

The scientist inhales a deep sniff of the steam curling off the soup.

EVIL SCIENTIST
Ah... What's that?... Worm's Wart!

He glances suspiciously at Sally.

EVIL SCIENTIST
What trail are you trying to throw me off now?

SALLY
(stammers; feigns innocence)
Nothing. W-w-what are you talking about?

The scientist pushes the bowl of soup toward Sally.

EVIL SCIENTIST
Taste it.

SALLY
But why? It's <u>your</u> lunch. There isn't much there in the first place.

EVIL SCIENTIST
Taste it.

SALLY
No.

EVIL SCIENTIST
Why not?

SALLY
I'm not hungry.
(acts all hurt)
What's wrong? I spent all morning on that soup. I thought you liked Worm's Wart.

EVIL SCIENTIST
There's nothing more suspicious than Worm's Wart -- it distracts one from every other taste and smell.

He dips a spoon into the soup then holds it up to Sally.

EVIL SCIENTIST
Until you taste it, I won't eat a bite.

Sally crumples.

SALLY
But I have to go out. Something's happening out there.

EVIL SCIENTIST
Whatever it is, it's none of your concern.

He waves the spoon at her.

EVIL SCIENTIST
Eat.

She keeps her lips closed tight.

EVIL SCIENTIST
(lapses into self-pity mode)
Then we'll both starve... An old man like me, who hardly has strength as it is -- me, without whom... me, your own father...

SALLY
Can't you make other creations?

EVIL SCIENTIST
I could. Of course I could.
But no one would be like you...
(pours it on again)
I'll never understand how you
can be so cold-hearted, how you
can treat me this way,
discarding me like--

It works. He wears Sally down:

SALLY
(interrupts)
All right... All right...
I'll eat it.

She closes her eyes and sips the soup off the spoon.

CUT TO:

EXT. TOWN SQUARE. DUSK.

The Mayor lies sprawled on top of his hearse, staring up at the sky for ideas. He's exhausted, as are the assembled citizens of Halloweenland, exhausted from exhausting their alternatives when it comes to seeking Jack.

The Mayor lifts his heavy head and feebly asks:

MAYOR
Did anybody think to dredge the
lake?

A recumbent corpse sits up and nods:

CORPSE
This morning.

The corpse flops down again.

The mayor lets his head fall back.

IN THE DISTANCE,

there's a BARK (O.S.)

WITCH #1
Hear that?

WITCH #2
What?

Now a DEEP RUMBLING (O.S.) can just be heard -- punctuated by another sharp BARK (O.S.)

WITCH #3
Ssh!

They listen. More RUMBLING. DEFINITE BARKS NOW.

VAMPIRE
(excited)
Zero?!

The sounds get louder, closer...

The group revives. The mayor sits up. Before long...

AROUND THE CORNER

comes an ecstatic Jack driving a jaunty, Christmasland SNOW MOBILE, heavily laden with Christmasland memorabilia. A joyous Zero loops-the-loop around his master.

MAYOR AND VARIOUS CITIZENS
Look! It's Jack!

JACK
I'M BACK!

The Halloweenland citizens gape.

VAMPIRE
Where've you been?

JACK
I can't wait to tell all of you all about it!
(to the Mayor)
Mayor! Call us a town meeting!

CUT TO:

EXT. HALLOWEEN STREETS. EVENING.

The Mayor's hearse glides through town, p.a. system blaring:

MAYOR'S AMPLIFIED VOICE
Town meeting! Town meeting tonight!

The hearse passes the

DESERTED GOTHIC MANSE.

Out stream the Creatures, Corpses, and other Vampires.

CUT TO:

EXT. CEMETERY. EVENING.

As the hearse passes and the announcement is heard, the GRAVESTONES open.

CUT TO:

EXT. MORE HALLOWEEN STREETS. EVENING.

The hearse threads through town past the EVIL SCIENTIST'S HOUSE.

CUT TO:

INT. EVIL SCIENTIST'S LABORATORY. EVENING/SAME TIME.

Sally and the Evil Scientist are both asleep -- the Evil Scientist snores, his head on the lab table beside the now empty bowl; Sally has fallen asleep on her way through the doorway -- hat on, arm half-way into the sleeve of her coat.

MAYOR'S AMPLIFIED VOICE (O.S.)
Town meeting! Town meeting tonight!

Neither of them hears the announcement. Neither of them stirs. Their deep sleep goes on undisturbed.

CUT TO:

EXT. TOWN HALL. NIGHT.

The town hall is a tilted Chautauqua meetinghouse. We HEAR the noise of the crowd inside and see a few Halloweenland latecomers hurry in.

CUT TO:

INT. TOWN HALL. NIGHT.

Jack stands at a podium on a stage at the end of the big meeting hall. Set up beside him is a table piled high with (at this point) non-descripit objects.

The murmuring crowd presses close to the stage. Of course, Sally and the Evil Scientist are absent.

Jack holds up his hands for attention.

JACK
Listen everyone. I want to tell you about where I've been!

He sings:

>>>>> *THE TOWN MEETING SONG*

JACK
There were objects so peculiar
They were not to be believed
All around things to tantalize my brain.
It's a world unlike anything I've ever seen
And as hard as I try...
I can't seem to describe
Like a most improbable dream...

But you must believe when I tell you this
It's as real as my skull, and it does exist.

Turning to sort through the objects on the table, Jack speaks:

JACK
Here... Let me show you.

The people press even closer.

PEOPLE
Ohhhh....

Jack holds up a wrapped gift:

JACK
This is a thing called a present.
The whole thing starts with a box...

VARIOUS PEOPLE
-- *A box?*
-- *Is is steel?*
-- *Are there locks?*
-- *Is it filled with a pox?*
-- *A pox!*
-- *How delightful, a pox!*

Jack interrupts their excited babbling:

JACK
If you please!!!

He sings on:

JACK
Just a box with bright colored paper
And the whole things topped with a bow.

VARIOUS PEOPLE
-- *A bow?*
-- *But why?*
-- *How ugly!*
-- *What's in it?*
-- *What's in it?*

JACK
That's the point of the thing, not to know!

VARIOUS PEOPLE
-- *It's a bat.*
-- *Will it bend?*
-- *It's a rat.*
-- *Will it break?*
-- *Perhaps it's the head that I found in the lake.*

JACK
Listen now, you don't understand.
That's not the point of Christmasland.

Jack shakes his finger at them:

JACK
Now, pay attention.

He takes a Christmas stocking off his display table and sings again:

JACK
Now we pick up an oversized sock...
And hang it like this on the wall.

The irrepressible crowd bubbles over again:

VARIOUS PEOPLE
-- *Oh yes, does it still have a foot?*
-- *Let me see...*
-- *Let me look...*
-- *Is it rotted and covered with gook?*

Jack is getting very frustrated:

JACK
Let me explain.

But to no avail...

VARIOUS PEOPLE
-- *Small toys?*
-- *Do they bite?*
-- *Do they snap?*
-- *Or perhaps they just spring out and*
Scare girls and boys.

The Mayor struts to the front of the audience.

MAYOR
What a splendid idea --
This Christmas sounds fun.
Why I fully endorse it!
Let's try it at once!

But doubt immediately overtakes the Mayor as Jack expresses his exasperation with the way things are going...

JACK
Everyone, please, now not so fast.
There's something here that you don't quite grasp.

Confident face evaporating, the Mayor skulks off.

Jack looks down at the faces tipped up toward him -- in the expressions, puzzlement replaces eagerness.

JACK
(to himself)
Well, I may as well give them
what they want.

Jack picks up his song again -- the showman once more:

JACK
And the best, I must confess,
I have saved for the last
For the ruler of this Christmasland...
Is a fearsome king with a deep mighty voice
Least, that is what I've come to understand.

And I've also heard it told
That he's something to behold
Like a lobster, huge and red...
And sets out to slay with his raingear on,
Carting bulging sacks with his big great arms...
That is, so I've heard it said.

Listening to this, the people of Halloweenland are absolutely spellbound, rapt, and quiet for a change.

JACK (CONT'D)
And on a dark, cold night
Under full moonlight
He flies off into a fog
Like a vulture in the sky...
And they call him -- Sandy Claws.

At this conclusion, a delightful shudder runs through the the audience.

CROWD
OOOOH....

They erupt into giddy chatter.

Jack watches them from the stage, then turns to his display table and begins gathering up his many Christmasland souvenirs.

JACK
(sings wistfully to himself)
Well, at least they're excited,
But they don't understand
That special kind of feeling
... In Christmasland.

Jack shakes a Frosty the Snowman paper weight and dreamily watches the little snowflakes drift down.

JACK
Oh well....

Sighing, he packs his treasures.

CUT TO:

INT. JACK'S TOWER. NIGHT.

Jack happily decorates his room with the Christmasland souvenirs.

-- He festoons the electric chair with boughs of holly and a sprig of mistletoe atop the confining head cap.

-- He tosses wreaths around the necks of the gargoyles that leer down from corners of the ceiling.

-- He ties a red bow on Zero.

LATER,

in bed, snuggled down, wearing a nightcap, his pile of Christmas books beside him, Jack gazes critically around his room. It is over-bright with electric lights -- they're strung everywhere they can be strung. Tinsel sparkles glaringly.

Lips pursed, Jack climbs out of bed to pull a string of lights out behind an obscuring cobweb, then isn't satisfied just to see them, but traces the intricate pattern of the cobweb with them. He steps back for perspective, comes forward to make an adjustment, steps back to look again... He frowns. He scratches his head.

JACK
It's not quite right; something's wrong... But what?...

He paces and looks, paces and looks -- but the mystery remains a mystery.

CUT TO:

INT. EVIL SCIENTIST'S HOUSE. DAY.

Still suffering the effects of her own sleeping potion, a disheveled Sally drags through the house.

The DOORBELL RINGS (O.S.).

Sally turns sluggishly.

SALLY
(slowly)
Who could that be?

She shuffles toward it.

CUT TO:

INT. EVIL SCIENTIST'S FRONT DOOR. DAY/MOMENTS LATER.

Sally drags open the front door. There, on the front stoop, to her utter astonishment stands

JACK.

He has on a cheery face, but it is obvious to her that he is disturbed.

JACK
Good morning.

SALLY
(voice little)
Y-you don't have to say that. You don't need to pretend. Not with me.

He looks quizzically at her.

JACK
Is the doctor in?

EVIL SCIENTIST (O.S.)
(calls)
Who is it, Sally?

Answering for her, Jack strides right in:

JACK
(calls to the doctor)
It's Jack Skellington.

EVIL SCIENTIST (O.S.)
(calls)
Jack! What a surprise, my boy, a rare pleasure indeed. Come on back... I'm in the laboratory.

Jack heads back. Sally looks tragically after.

CUT TO:

INT. JACK'S TOWER. DUSK.

Jack intently sets up a make-shift laboratory with equipment borrowed from the Evil Scientist -- a microscope, mortar and pestle, petri dishes, a centrifuge, test tubes, beakers already filled with steaming liquid.

CUT TO:

INT. EVIL SCIENTIST'S LABORATORY. NIGHT.

As Sally shuffles timidly into the room, the scientist doesn't look up from his reading.

SALLY
(blurts)
Jack Skellington was here this morning.

The scientist nods without looking up:

EVIL SCIENTIST
Uh-huh.

SALLY
He stayed a long time.

The scientist nods again.

SALLY
When he left, he took a lot of equipment with him.

EVIL SCIENTIST
He's conducting experiments of his own.

SALLY
Experiments?

Suddenly afraid for Jack, Sally wheels around and stumbles OUT INTO THE

HALL

and UP THE

RICKETY STAIRS.

CUT TO:

INT. SALLY'S ROOM. NIGHT/MOMENTS LATER.

Sally rushes in and hurries across to her window. She stands on tip-toe and strains to peer out. In the distance, between two other buildings, she can just MAKE OUT A CORNER OF

JACK'S TOWER.

A strange glow emanates from there.

Sally stares for a long time, biting her lip with worry, then decisively:

Sally turns to her desk. She takes out a piece of paper and a pen and writes, reading aloud as she goes:

SALLY
Dear Doctor... Please don't come after me again. Please let me go this time. I am all grown up and need to find my own life now. I hope you will understand, some day at least. Signed -- Sally. P.S. I'll come visit very soon. P.P.S. There's fresh soup in the 'fridge. P.P.P.S. It isn't spiked.

She adds some x's and o's to the bottom of the letter, then sets it on the pillow of her bed where the doctor will be sure to find it.

She takes a needle and spool of thread out of her drawer, stuffs them into her dress, then without warning,

JUMPS OUT HER WINDOW

with suicidal abandon.

CUT TO:

EXT. EVIL SCIENTIST'S HOUSE. NIGHT/CONTINUOUS TIME.

Sally lands on the street outside -- sprawled, torn apart, stuffing flowing out, stitches burst.

In a moment, she flops upright. She pulls out the needle, the thread, threads the needle and, glancing every so often over her shoulder at the Evil Scientist's house, hurriedly proceeds to sew herself back together again.

The job done. She stashes the needle and thread and wobbly (her stitches are looser than the doctor's) gets to her feet to go -- only she's sewed one of her legs on backwards -- so that when she takes a step, her legs walk in opposite directions and she falls right over.

She lets out a little moan of frustration. Swivelling, she looks back at the house, afraid of getting caught...

She works even faster now, ripping out the stitches on the leg she replaced backwards and basting it back on facing forwards.

These stitches are really huge and ungainly. Still, they're substantial enough to allow her to get to her feet and totter away, though limping rather badly.

CUT TO:

INT. JACK'S TOWER. SUNRISE.

Jack has worked through the night and continues to work, concentrated, intent, doing his methodical best to study Christmas.

-- He stares at an image of Sandy Claws he's drawn on the chalkboard -- with giant red lobster hand and elaborate raingear -- then erases it.

-- He leafs back and forth through the Christmas books, every so often stopping briefly on an image -- RUDOLF, THE RED-NOSED REINDEER OR FROSTY, THE SNOWMAN OR AN ANNOTATED ILLUSTRATION OF "THE STOCKINGS ARE HUNG BY THE CHIMNEY WITH CARE."

-- He scrapes a little bit of the shininess off a Christmas tree ball. With a mortar and pestle, he grinds the flake of shininess to a sparkling powder, then sprinkles the powder over himself as if it were fairy dust. He strikes a pose and waits -- but no transformation occurs. In another beat, he turns back to his work table, freshly determined.

JACK
Sooner or later this Christmas will yield up its secrets to me. I'll crack it! I will!

-- He studies a strand of tinsel under the microscope. It reflects his own hollow eye socket back to him.

CUT TO:

EXT. JACK'S TOWER. DAY.

Hiding in the shadows of the building across the street, Sally stares up at Jack's room.

She pulls back out of sight once -- when the Evil Scientist passes, obviously looking for her -- but steps out again as soon as he's gone.

Other citizens of Halloween look up at Jack's windows as they pass and shake their heads with concern, but only Sally keeps a vigil.

CUT TO:

INT. JACK'S TOWER. DAY/LATER.

Jack stands at the chalkboard where he's scribbled elaborate formulae: **Good Cheer + Roasting Chestnuts + Sandy Claws = Christmas Fun. Sugar Plums + Christmas trees + Rudolf, the Red-Nosed Reindeer = Christas Fun. Presents + Mistletoe + Snowballs = Christas Fun. If A = B and B = C and A = C, then what isn't D?**

He feverishly crosses out some phrases, corrects others, substitutes, modifies.

CUT TO:

EXT. JACK'S TOWER. DUSK.

Using a pulley, Sally surreptitiously hoists up a basket of food.

CUT TO:

INT. JACK'S TOWER. DUSK/CONTINUOUS TIME.

A TOY STEAM ENGINE

now chugs along tracks laid around the perimeter of Jack's room. Puffing smoke, it hauls a string of open cars filled with Christmas dolls and toys. Jack adds more toys as the tiny train cars pass him.

He looks up at the ODD SCRAPING SOUND of Sally's food basket knocking against the window.

AT THE WINDOW,

he unhooks the basket and lifts it in. Inside is dinner, lovingly wrapped in a napkin -- a skeleton chicken, a couple of apple cores, and a cold bottle of newt juice.

Jack leans

OUT THE WINDOW

to see who sent this to him. His gaze locks with Sally's -- far below. A beat. He nods his thanks. She waves -- slowly, in tragic sympathy. He pulls back into his tower.

ON THE GROUND,

Sally keeps staring faithfully up at Jack's window.

IN HIS TOWER,

Jack dances around a Christmas tree, giddily tossing on decorations.

CUT TO:

EXT. JACK'S TOWER. NIGHT.

Sally is back at her post across the street, watching

JACK'S WINDOW

where a TALL CANDLE BURNS.

AS IF IN TIME-LAPSE, the candle burns all the way down while the NIGHT PASSES INTO

EXT. JACK'S TOWER. DAY.

Sally sleeps curled in the doorway across the street. She wakes to

A SMALL CROWD

gathering beneath Jack's window.

>>>>> *JACK'S OBSESSION*

TWO VAMPIRES
(quietly sing)
Something's up with Jack, something's up with Jack...

A THIRD VAMPIRE adds his voice...

THREE VAMPIRES
Don't know if we're ever going to get him back.

Flanked by two corpses, a SLATHERING BEAST lumbers up, singing...

SLATHERING BEAST
He's all alone up there, locked away inside...

The CORPSE on his right joins in...

BEAST AND CORPSE
Never says a word...

Then BOTH CORPSES and the beast sing...

BEAST AND TWO CORPSES
... hope he hasn't died...

Then the whole crowd sings...

CROWD
Something's up with Jack...
... Something's up with Jack...
... Something's up with Jack...

Sally stays back, separate from the crowd, silent.

CUT TO:

INT. TOWER. DAY/SAME TIME.

Jack stands in the center of his room, a demon possessed, surrounded by Christmas mayhem -- the glittery decorations and toys and books strewn all about him.

He sings:

JACK
Christmastime is buzzing in my skull.
Will it let me be? I cannot tell.
There're so many things I cannot grasp...
When I think I've got it, then at last
Through my bony fingers it does slip
Like a snowflake in a fiery grip.

Something's here I'm not quite getting
Though I try, I keep forgetting
Like a memory long since past
Here in an instant, gone in a flash...
What does it mean? What does it mean?

In these little bric-a-brac,
A secret waiting to be cracked.
These dolls and toys confuse me so...
Confound it all -- I love it though!

Simple objects nothing more
But something's hidden through the door.
Though I do not have the key,
Something's there I cannot see.
What does it mean? What does it mean?

I've read these Christmas books so many times
I know the stories and I know the rhymes
I know the Christmas carols all by heart...
My skull's so full, it's tearing me apart.
As often as I read them, something's wrong...
So hard to put my bony finger on...

A thought strikes Jack. He takes a new tack... He whirls around, singing...

JACK (CONT'D)
Or perhaps it's really not as
Deep as I've been led to think.
Am I trying much too hard...?
Of course! I've been too close to see!
The answer's right in front of me!

It's simple really, very clear,
Like music drifting in the air
Invisible but everywhere.
Just because I cannot see it
Doesn't mean I can't believe it.

Enthusiasm takes the place of torment. Joy lightens Jack's tortured soul.

JACK (CONT'D)
You know I think this Christmas thing --
It's not as tricky as it seems.
And why should they have all the fun?
It should belong to anyone...
Not anyone, in fact, but me!
Why, I could make a Christmas tree.
And there's no reason I can find
That I couldn't handle Christmastime.

I bet I could improve it too!
And that's exactly what I'll do!

Jack hurries to the window and throws it open.

JACK
(shouts out)
EUREKA!

BELOW,

the crowd is relieved.

CROWD
Ahhh....

They smile up at their beloved Skeleton Jack. All except for Sally.

SALLY
(sadly to herself)
Oh Jack... Now what fever has engulfed you? Your poor sensitive mind...

Sally stares up at him...

CUT TO:

EXT. TOWN HALL. DAY.

A LINE of waiting Halloweeners extends out the entrance doors. The word, 'Christmas,' buzzes in the air.

Sally stands in line with everyone else -- somewhere near the back, just behind the members of the Street Band. She practices what she's going to say to Jack when it's her turn --

SALLY
(whispers almost inaudibly to herself)
Jack, you must let go of this insanity. Don't make this mistake. Taking over Christmas is no way to fill the gaping hole you feel inside.

Sally cowers as she hears the Mayor call:

MAYOR (O.S.)
DR. FINKELSTEIN TO THE FRONT OF THE LINE! DR. FINKELSTEIN, STEP RIGHT INSIDE!

Sally ducks out of sight behind the FURRY BEHEMOTH in back of her as the

EVIL SCIENTIST

hobbles by. Looking for Sally, he peers through his pince-nez at the faces he passes.

MAYOR (O.S.)
(shouts again)
DR. FINKELSTEIN! WE'RE LOOKING FOR DR. FINKELSTEIN!

The Evil Scientist hobbles through the front door.

CUT TO:

INT. TOWN HALL. DAY/CONTINUOUS TIME.

At the end of the hall is Jack.

To one side of him is his Christmas treasure trunk filled to the brim with dolls and toys and decorations.

On the other side, the Mayor sits at a table. Before him is an open scroll -- a long list. With his raven feather pen, the Mayor enthusiastically marks off items and occasionally scribbles notes: forging ahead with the making of Christmas, he and Jack are giving out assignments to the citizens of Halloweenland.

At the moment, Jack discusses dollmaking with a COUPLE OF LARGE VAMPIRES... One of the vampires cradles an example of a BABYDOLL in the palm of his hand. As he rocks it, its eyes close if it's lying down, but open when it's brought upright. The doll also cries -- bleating sadly.

The Vampires make a face at one another.

ONE VAMPIRE
What kind of noise is that for a baby to make?

The other vampire shrugs.

JACK
Can you handle it?

OTHER VAMPIRE
We can improve it too.

JACK
I knew it!

The Vampires scurry off, still studying the babydoll -- looking for other improvements.

Jack turns to the Evil Scientist.

JACK
Doctor -- just the man I wanted to see.

Jack pulls a book out of his trunk. He leafs through it to a PICTURE OF SANTA'S REINDEER hooked up to the sleigh and shows the Evil Scientist.

JACK
I need some of these.

The Evil Scientist peers closely at the picture of the reindeer in Jack's book, making quick calculations.

EVIL SCIENTIST
These...? Their construction should be very simple, I think.

THE MAYOR

bellows again, practically in the Evil Scientist's ear.

MAYOR
DR. FINKELSTEIN!

EVIL SCIENTIST
(snaps)
Right here.

The Mayor glares at him resentfully.

MAYOR
It's about time.

The Mayor makes a big show of checking off the doctor's name.

Next, three mischievous Trick Or Treaters scuttle up to the Mayor's table. They are small but insidious. Professionals. Their names are LOCK, SHOCK & BARREL.

LOCK
We're here! You sent for us!

SHOCK
Specifically.

BARREL
By name.

LOCK
Lock.

SHOCK
Shock.

BARREL
Barrel.

The Mayor announces the little Trick Or Treaters:

MAYOR
Oogie Boogie's Boys to see you, Jack!

JACK
Excellent.

The Evil Scientist shuffles of with the book.

The Mayor studies his list again:

MAYOR
What a smashing success our Christmas will be!

Jack waves Lock, Shock & Barrel over...

JACK
I have a very important, very delicate job for you.

They come close and huddle before him. Jack whispers his plan -- they titter, half-whispering themselves.

CUT TO:

EXT. STREET OUTSIDE TOWN HALL. DAY/LATER.

The three little Trick Or Treaters tip-toe out, still tittering and whispering. They sing:

>>>>> *THE SCHEMING SONG*

LOCK, SHOCK & BARREL
Kidnap Mr. Sandy Claws...?

LOCK
I wanna do it...

BARREL
... Let's draw straws.

SHOCK
Jack said we should work together.

BARREL
Three of a kind...

LOCK
... Birds of a feather.

SHOCK
Now and forever...

LOCK, SHOCK & BARREL
... Weeee!

They scoot out of sight around a corner.

CUT TO:

EXT. OUTSKIRTS OF TOWN. DAY/LATER.

Lock, Shock & Barrel head toward their digs out of town.

LOCK, SHOCK & BARREL
Kidnap the Sandy Claws, lock him up real tight
Throw away the key and then
Turn off all the lights.

LOCK
First we're going to set some bait
Inside a nasty trap and wait.
When he comes a-sniffing we will
Snap the trap and close the gate.

SHOCK
Wait! I've got a better plan
To catch this big red lobster man.
Let's pop him in a boiling pot
And when he's done we'll butter him up!

CUT TO:

EXT. OOGIE BOOGIE'S DUNGEON. DAY/LATER.

Lock, Shock & Barrel arrive at the ominous stinking place.

LOCK, SHOCK & BARREL
Kidnap the Sandy Claws
Throw him in a box
Bury him for ninety years
And then see if he talks.

BARREL
Then Mr. Oogie Boogie Man
Can take the whole thing over then.
He'll be so pleased I do declare
That he will cook him rare...

They zip down the cellar stairs

LOCK, SHOCK & BARREL
Weeee!

The dank, crumbling stairs lead to...

CUT TO:

INT. LOCK, STOCK & BARREL'S PART OF BOOGIE'S DUNGEON. DAY

Once in their corner of the dungeon, the little Trick Or Treaters start to gather the things they'll need to do their job.

SHOCK
I say that we take a cannon
Aim it at his door and then
Knock three times and when he answers
Sandy Claws will be no more.

LOCK
You're so stupid, think now --
If we blow him up to smithereens,
We may lose some pieces and then
Jack will beat us black and green.

LOCK, SHOCK & BARREL
Kidnap the Sandy Claws
Tie him in a bag
Throw him in the ocean
And then see if he is sad.

There is a bone-chilling stirring in the next room. All three of the little Trick or Treaters react. As one, they shoot over to the corner furthest away from the sounds and lower their voices:

LOCK, SHOCK & BARREL
Because Mr. Oogie Boogie is the meanest guy around,
If I were on his Boogie list. I'd get out of town.

BARREL
He'll be so pleased by our success
That he'll reward us too I bet.
Perhaps he'll make his special brew
Of snake and spider stew...

LOCK, SHOCK & BARREL
MMMMMMM...!

SHOCK
We're his little henchman and we take our job with pride.

SHOCK AND BARREL
We do our best to please him, and stay on his good side.

LOCK
I wish my cohorts weren't so dumb.

BARREL
I'm not the dumb one...

SHOCK
... You're no fun.

LOCK
Shut up and listen...!

The other two stop...

LOCK
I've got something, listen now,
This one is real good, you'll see.
We'll send a present to his door
Upon there'll be a note to read.

BARREL
Now in the box, we'll wait and hide
Until his curiosity
Entices him to look inside...

LOCK, SHOCK & BARREL
And then we'll have him, one, two, three!

Fully exuberant again, they gleefully collect their last few necessities.

LOCK, SHOCK & BARREL
Kidnap the Sandy Claws, beat him with a stick...
Lock him up for ninety years and see what makes him tick.

They head back up their cellar steps.

CUT TO:

EXT. OUTSKIRTS OF TOWN. DAY/LATER.

The three Trick or Treaters race through a deserted lot.

LOCK, SHOCK & BARREL
Kidnap the Sandy Claws, tie him in a knot
Put him in a coffin, how we'd like to see him rot.

CUT TO:

EXT. HALLOWEENLAND CEMETERY. DAY/LATER.

Lock, Shock & Barrel skip among the tombstones.

LOCK, SHOCK & BARREL
Kidnap the Sandy Claws... Chop him into bits
Mr. Oogie Boogie is sure to get his kicks.

CUT TO:

EXT. EDGE OF FOREST. DAY/LATER.

Lock, Shock & Barrel head for the forest that Jack wandered through.

LOCK, SHOCK & BARREL
Kidnap the Sandy Claws... See what we will see,
Lock him in a cage and then throw away the key.

They reach the very edge forest -- they are still in the light; one step ahead, it is dark and gloomy.

Lock, the natural-born leader of the three, stops in his tracks in the last possible light. The other two bump into him, in succession. Then all three crouch down at once. Beat.

Simultaneously giggling, they suddenly streak forward into the woods and, in a moment, are swallowed up into the

PITCH-BLACK.

The only evidence of them left is the sound of their giggles. The giggles recede, then fade...

CUT TO:

EXT. TOWN HALL. DUSK.

No part of the line stands outside now. The few citizens left still waiting for assignments stand...

CUT TO:

INT. TOWN HALL. DUSK/CONTINUOUS TIME.

A very anxious Sally stands at the head of the line, in a panic, going over and over what she intends to say:

SALLY
(almost inaudibly)
Jack, you must let go of this insanity... This is a mistake...

Behind her the Furry Behemoth waits patiently.

JACK

works with the Street Band. Demonstrating, he shakes a harness piece studded with sleigh bells. The bells jingle cheerfully.

JACK
Okay. Now you.

The members of the Band rattle their bones in response -- shaking legs and arms, echoing the jingle of the bells, but with their own distinctive hollow CLANK.

Jack laughs, enormously pleased.

JACK
Perfect!... Now let's try this...

Using various jingling bells, Jack shakes out the tune to "Jingle Bells."

The Band clanks the tune right back -- phrase for phrase.

SALLY

watches with an increasing sense of doom as her turn with Jack nears.

Jack heartily shakes hands and back-slaps the three members of the street band. They head off practicing...

JACK
(calls after)
Thanks! You're the absolute best!

He turns to Sally -- who stands frozen, wide-eyed, her heart a wild bird trapped in the cage of her chest. He smiles encouragingly at her.

JACK
Hi. I've saved a really special job for you.

He gestures for her to step closer.

Stiffly, she does.

JACK
(confidentially)
I want you to be the one who makes my Sandy Claws outfit.

She looks stunned. Jack nods eagerly and pats her, mistaking her silence for awe at the responsibility.

JACK
I know you can do it.

He enthusiastically proceeds to describe the costume:

JACK
It's bright red, the reddest red you can imagine -- both the jacket and the pair pants... The boots are black. There's a big black belt that goes around the middle... Oh, and there's white trim on the cuffs and collar.

Swallowing hard, Sally looks up at him, her wide eyes moist. Her voice is tiny.

SALLY
Are you sure, Jack?

Jack suddenly looks confused. He stops mid-gesture --

JACK
Am I sure?

Brow furrowing, he stares at the ceiling and thinks.

Sally holds her breath, hoping...

Finally, Jack shrugs.

JACK
Well... the trim is traditionally white from everything I've studied, but if you think green would give it more dash... I trust your judgement. I know you'll do a great job. Whatever you decide!

AT THAT MOMENT,

Lock, Shock and Barrel race in dragging behind them a big sack with something squirming inside!

LOCK, SHOCK & BARREL
Jack! Jack! We caught him! We've got him!

JACK

strides excitedly to meet them, leaving Sally.

SALLY

flees, mortified, miserable. She had hoped to help Jack, to spare him the pain of his enterprise, to save him from himself... Floppy and weak (her legs lost some stuffing in her jump from the Evil Scientist's window), she runs as best she can, arms and legs pinwheeling...

LOCK, SHOCK & BARREL,

in a frenzy of giggling, open the big sack and who should jump out but the

EASTER BUNNY.

Jack's face drops. He turns on the three Trick Or Treaters.

JACK
(loud)
That's not Sandy Claws!

SHOCK
It isn't?

BARREL
Who is it then?

JACK
(louder)
Not Sandy Claws!

The three shrink back.

LOCK
We followed your instructions.

BARREL
We went through the door...

SHOCK
...In the tree.

JACK
Which door!?

LOCK
<u>The</u> door.

JACK
WELL, TAKE HIM BACK!

Jack turns to the Easter Bunny and speaks loudly and slowly to him, hoping to be understood.

JACK
I'm very sorry for the inconvenience, sir.

He scowls at the three Trick Or Treaters.

JACK
Shall I send somebody else for Sandy Claws?

LOCK, SHOCK & BARREL
No!

BARREL
Not at all!

SHOCK
We can handle it.

LOCK
We'll get it right this time --

LOCK, SHOCK & BARREL
-- for sure!

JACK
I told you -- there's more than one door! Sandy Claws is behind the door shaped like this --

He holds up a cut-out of a Christmas tree.

LOCK
Got it!

They stuff the Easter Bunny back into the sack and hurry off.

JACK
(shouts after them)
Take him home first. And apologize again! Be careful with Sandy Claws when you catch him! Treat him nicely!

They scurry out the double doors.

CUT TO:

INT. CHRISTMAS FACTORY. ANOTHER DAY.

Sally sits at a sewing machine, abjectly stitching Jack's Santa Claus suit. Finished with a long seam, she holds up the suit to see how it's coming along... and shudders in its cheerful, bright red glare.

SALLY
If only he would come back to his senses...

Shaking her head, she sets the suit back in place to stitch up another seam.

But Sally is alone in her distress. Beyond her -- the little Halloween factory gladly hums along making Christmas.

>>>>> *MAKING CHRISTMAS SONG* --

Jack supervises and approves as the residents of Halloweenland busily manufacture the Halloween version of Christmas toys, dolls, decorations, doing their well-intentioned best to create the warmest, most magical Christmas yet. The results of their eager efforts, unbeknownst to them, often painfully miss the mark:

-- Barbie's a voodoo doll

-- The horrible-looking demon that springs from a Jack-In-The-Box has a sweet decorative bow on it.

-- Strings of electric lights are composed of tiny skulls through which the colored lights gleam.

MEANTIME,

the Evil Scientist assembles Skeleton Reindeer from piles of bones.

He also takes the opportunity to assemble himself a new and improved Sally. He animates her and she smiles at him. He is pleased. She assists him in his work animating the reindeer.

WHILE CHRISTMAS IS BEING MANUFACTURED IN HALLOWEENLAND, IT IS ALSO BEING MANUFACTURED IN...

CUT TO:

INT. CHRISTMASTOWN FACTORY. DAY/SAME TIME.

The factory looks like it was constructed by a master gingerbread house maker, all dandy jigsaw angles and bulbous shapes and filigree. There's a calendar that tells the NUMBER OF DAYS LEFT 'TIL CHRISTMAS -- it says ONE.

At quaint conveyor belts, SANTA'S ELVES work their hardest:

-- Assembling the Christmas toys we most sentimentally associate with Christmas, among them -- cherubic baby dolls in bonnets and gowns, gorgeously painted wooden rocking horses.

-- Wrapping the beautiful gifts, colorful papers, elaborate bows.

-- Labelling packages.

CUT TO:

EXT. REINDEER SCHOOL. DAY.

Santa's team of sleigh-pulling reindeer practices roof jumping techniques. One YOUNG BUCK lands with a *splat* and must try again.

CUT TO:

INT. SANTA'S COTTAGE. DAY.

MRS. CLAUS putters in the kitchen while

SANTA CLAUS

sits in his big armchair in front of a roaring fire. He is checking a long list, checking it twice... when the

DOORBELL

rings.

Setting aside his list, Santa hoists himself to his feet and slowly crosses to the door. He opens it and SEES

LOCK, SHOCK & BARREL

crouched on his front stoop. They cry their little banshee cry and leap up at his face with their sack wide open, bagging him -- all goes

BLACK.

CUT TO:

EXT. HALLOWEENLAND TOWN SQUARE. CHRISTMAS EVE.

The town has been festooned with "Christmas" decorations.

Presents are being loaded into the coffin sleigh. The Evil Scientist oversees the harnessing up of his skeleton reindeer. He glowers over at

SALLY

morosely helps Jack on with the red coat of his Santa Claus outfit. He already wears the pants and boots. Jack is positively thrilled with the costume.

JACK
It's perfect! It couldn't be more perfect!

Jack laughs -- his version of a booming laugh.

Sally pulls out her needle to make a last minute adjustment to one of the cuffs. Then she sticks the needle back behind her ear where it will be handy.

Jack puts on his white beard and turns eagerly to check his

REFLECTION

in the polished black side of the coffin sleigh. He grins at himself... then, in a moment, his smile fades and he furrows his brow... He peers closely at himself.

JACK
Something's missing... but what? I've got the beard, the coat, the boots, the belt--

His musing is INTERRUPTED by the COMMOTION

Lock, Shock & Barrel cause as they scuttle into view, out of breath, struggling with their enormous sack.

LOCK, SHOCK & BARREL
This time we bagged him!

LOCK
This time we really did!

BARREL
He sure is big, Jack...

SHOCK
And heavy...

Reaching Jack, they dump the sack and reveal the prize inside, untying the knot and peeling back the sides, uncovering the legendary Sandy Claws.

JACK
Sandy Claws! Himself! In person! I can hardly believe it! What a pleasure it is to meet you!

Santa blinks. Jack grabs his hand and shakes it.

JACK
Why, you have hands... You don't have claws at all...

Santa looks around to see where he has been brought. He gapes in horror at the "Christmas" decorations everywhere, at the coffin sleigh, at the reindeer, at the staring residents of Halloweenland, at Jack before him in what looks very much like a deflated version of his own outfit. THE SHOCK RENDERS HIM SPEECHLESS.

JACK
(delighted by Santa's reaction)
Surprised, aren't you? I knew you would be! But you haven't seen anything yet...

Jack pauses a beat for impact, then springs the good news:

JACK (CONT'D)
You don't need to have another worry about Christmas this year. Not a single care. We've seen to every detail.

Santa's eyes go wide and he begins to sputter -- searching for the words that could conceivably express the depths of his feelings.

Sally looks on, horrified.

JACK
Consider this a vacation, Sandy, a reward. You've worked hard for a long time. It's your turn to take it easy. Leave everything to me...

JACK (CONT'D)
You're going to be so pleased. You just relax and enjoy yourself while you're here.
(to Lock, Shock & Barrel)
See that he's comfortable, boys...

Lock, Shock and Barrel grab ahold of Santa to drag him off again, but Jack stops them--

JACK
Just a second, fellas.

Jack plucks the red cap off Santa's head.

JACK
Of course! That's what I'm missing.... You don't mind if I borrow it, do you? Thanks!

He pops Santa's cap on his own head. It is too big and droops charmingly over one of Jack's big eye sockets. He grins the biggest grin yet.

SALLY
(chants softly to herself)
There must be something...
There must be something...
There must be something I can do to stop him... I know!
I'll make him some tea!

She rushes off.

CUT TO:

EXT. HALLOWEENLAND STREETS. CHRISTMAS EVE/A LITTLE LATER.

Lock, Shock & Barrel strain to push/pull/haul/carry the astonished, still sputtering Santa Claus through town.

BARREL
Where're we taking him?

SHOCK
Where?

LOCK
To Oogie Boogie's place, of course...

LOCK (CONT'D)
...There isn't any place in the whole world more comfortable than that, is there?

SHOCK & BARREL
No, there isn't!

LOCK
And Jack said to make him comfortable, didn't he?

SHOCK & BARREL
Yes, he did!

The three gleefully giggle their hideous giggle.

CUT TO:

EXT. TOWN SQUARE. CHRISTMAS EVE/LATER.

The Mayor gives Jack the grandest possible Halloween send-off:

MAYOR
...Think of us as you soar triumphantly through the sky, outshining any star, your silhouette a dark blot breaking the perfect circle of the moon... We who are left behind here will surely be thinking of you.

Jack stands tall beside his sleigh.

THE STREET BAND

rattles a delicate "Jingle Bells."

THE TOWNSPEOPLE

look on proudly.

SALLY

hurries back with a steaming cup of her special sleeping-potion tea.

THE MAYOR

blabs on:

MAYOR (CONT'D)
You who are our pride; you who are our glory; you who have frightened millions into an early grave; you who have devastated --

His speech is SUDDENLY INTERRUPTED BY THE

DESCENT OF A THICK HALLOWEEN FOG.

The fog swirls around the assembled crowd. It licks at the Mayor. It threatens to engulf Jack, the sleigh, the skeleton reindeer.

JACK
Oh no...!

SALLY

gazes about her in happy wonder. The sight of the fog brings a wide, welcoming look of hope to her face.

She dumps out the tea -- it eats a hole in the ground -- she won't be needing it after all...

THE FOG

swallows everyone.

JACK (O.S.)
I'll never get the sleigh off the ground in this. The reindeer can't see an inch in front of their noses...

VAMPIRE VOICE (O.S.)
This fog's as thick as...

MONSTER VOICE (O.S.)
(finishes the thought)
... Jellied brains.

VAMPIRE VOICE (O.S.)
Yeah...

JACK (O.S.)
(woe increasing)
There go my hopes, my plans, my dreams... the tall-tales, the legends, the lies...

There is a thin ghostly bark (O.S.) -- it belongs to Zero. His little jack o'lantern nose floats in... a tiny beacon penetrating the fog.

CORPSE VOICE (O.S.)
(dour and slow)
There goes Christmas...

JACK (O.S.)
(morose)
No, Zero... Not now... Down, boy...

After a long beat...

JACK (O.S.)
(has a sudden idea)
Hey! WAIT A MINUTE!

We HEAR the sounds of RUMMAGING, of Jack MUTTERING:

JACK (O.S.)
Where did I put that book...?
I know it's in here somewhere... Here it is...

We HEAR pages turned back and forth... then with characteristic melodramatic flourish Jack RECITES:

JACK (O.S.)
'Zero with your nose so bright,
Won't you guide my sleigh tonight?'

Barking, Zero swoops with pure joy.

The crowd cheers.

Zero floats to the front of the sleigh and takes position. His jack o'lantern nose glows brighter and brighter, soon illuminating the whole sleigh. Jack leaps aboard.

JACK
We're off!

With a crack of his skeleton whip, Jack and his ghostly entourage are instantly aloft. In a moment, they are gone...

SALLY

gapes into the swirling fog. She stares miserably into the cup she emptied, then back up into the fog-choked sky.

>>>>> *SALLY'S SONG*

The Street Band materializes out of the fog. They listen to her mournful song. Moved, they accompany her.

CUT TO:

EXT. STARRY, STARRY NIGHT. CHRISTMAS EVE.

Jack's coffin sleigh whiplashes wildly through the glittering night sky -- a giddy, out of control amusement park ride. At the front of the sleigh, Zero exuberantly howls.

FAR BELOW,

peaceful little houses dot the landscape, innocently waiting for Christmas.

Laughing his best booming Santa laugh, Jack begins his descent.

CUT TO:

EXT. SUBURBIA. CHRISTMAS EVE/LATER.

The coffin sleigh CRASH LANDS on the roof of a little house, making such a racket that it wakes the sleeping family inside: the BABY CRIES BLOODY MURDER and we can HEAR the VOICE OF THE WIFE URGING HER HUSBAND TO INVESTIGATE.

A big grin slashed across his face, Jack pops up out of the wreckage. He gleefully slithers over to the chimney and JUMPS inside.

CUT TO:

INT. LITTLE HOUSE. CHRISTMAS EVE/LATER.

JACK'S SKELETAL HAND

drops hideous little toys into the Christmas stockings hung up along the fireplace mantelpiece.

THE HYSTERICAL VOICES (O.S.)

continue: ("Get the gun!" "We don't have a gun!" "Well, grab something!"). As does the CRYING of the baby. CLOSE BY:

LITTLE BOY'S VOICE (O.S.)
(sweetly)
Santa?

JACK

spins around to see A LITTLE BOY STARING UP AT HIM. At the sight of Jack, the little boy looks stunned.

JACK
Merry Christmas!

Jack springs over to the boy. The little boy stands frozen in place. The chaos (O.S.) persists: ("Where is he?" "He's not in his bed?" "No!" "Check downstairs." "You check downstairs.") Overhead, footsteps thump to and fro. The baby still bawls. Jack bends down to the little boy.

JACK
And what is your name?

The boy doesn't answer, doesn't move; he just keeps staring.

JACK
I bet I have a special present for you anyway!

Jack fishes into his big sack of toys. He pulls a SHRUNKEN HEAD out by its hank of hair and hands it to the little boy.

JACK
There you go, sonny!

With a screeching "Ho, Ho, Ho," Jack springs back to the fireplace and WHOOSHES up the

CHIMNEY to the...

CUT TO:

EXT. ROOFTOP. CHRISTMAS EVE/CONTINUOUS TIME.

Jack leaps onto the remains of his coffin sleigh and off he flies.

CUT TO:

INT. LITTLE HOUSE. CHRISTMAS EVE/SAME TIME.

Still standing where Jack left him, the little boy stares morosely into the grotesque face of the Shrunken Head.

(O.S.) Footsteps charge down the steps and pound down the hall to the living room doorway -- both parents at once. We HEAR their horrified reactions, their BLOOD-CURDLING SCREAMS.

CUT TO:

EXT. ROOFTOPS. CHRISTMAS EVE/LATER

Jack leaps nimbly from rooftop to rooftop -- merrily delivering presents, blissfully unaware of the havoc he is creating....

CUT TO:

EXT. HALLOWEENLAND. CHRISTMAS EVE/SAME TIME

Several residents of Halloweenland eagerly crowd around the witches' cauldron to watch Jack whose giddy journey above the rooftops is reflected in the bubbling brew. The gathering oohs and ahhhs and applauds.

Sally is not among those watching. A shriek of joy makes her peek forlornly out from behind a distant building. She pulls back out of sight.

CUT TO:

INT. VARIOUS HOUSES. CHRISTMAS EVE/SAME TIME.

-- DOORS ARE LOCKED.

-- BOLTS ARE THROWN.

-- TELEPHONES ARE DIALLED: "Hello, Police?!"

-- A BABY DOLL is cradled in the lap of a LITTLE GIRL. For no apparent reason, the baby doll's eyes SUDDENLY OPEN. The little girl shrieks and throws the doll off her lap.

-- A MAN-EATING WREATH snakes off the door where it hangs, sending out tentacles and tendrils that wrap around the LEGS OF A KISSING COUPLE, YANKING THEM CLEAR OFF THEIR FEET.

-- A VAMPIRE TEDDY BEAR smiles as it totters across a room.

-- THE TRACKS OF A MONSTROUS TOY TRAIN slither around a room, chasing RETREATING CHILDREN.

CUT TO:

EXT. NEIGHBORHOOD. CHRISTMAS EVE/SAME TIME.

Jack gleefully continues delivering Christmas, mistaking the irate screams and shaking fists of citizens below for gratitude. He waves and calls:

JACK
YOU'RE WELCOME!!!

CUT TO:

INT. POLICE STATION. CHRISTMAS EVE/SAME TIME.

THE SEVERAL PHONES lined up on the SERGEANT'S DESK ring off the hook. We see the sergeant as a blue uniform, a big hand. He answers phone after phone:

POLICE SERGEANT'S VOICE
(into the various telephones)
Police station... Where did you spot him?... As fast as we can... Police station... I know, I know. A skeleton. Where are you?... Right... Just keep calm... Turn off all the lights. Make sure the doors are locked... Hello? Police station...

CUT TO:

EXT. RADIO TOWER. CHRISTMAS EVE/LATER.

The news broadcasts from a TALL RADIO TOWER:

RADIO BROADCAST
Someone parading as Santa Claus is ruining Christmas!... Reports are pouring in from all over the globe that an imposture is shamelessly impersonating Santa Claus and--

CUT TO:

EXT. HALLOWEENLAND. CHRISTMAS EVE/SAME TIME.

Sally picks up the broadcast in the sewing needle she stuck behind her ear:

RADIO BROADCAST (CONT'D)
-- mocking and mangling this joyous holiday. Gruesome nightmares have replaced the visions of sugarplums that should be dancing in our children's heads. Whole families scream in terror. The authorities assure us that, at this moment, the military is mobilizing to stop whoever it is that is perpetrating this heinous crime...

RADIO BROADCAST (CONT'D)
The monster must and will be stopped. Santa Claus! -- wherever you are. Come back! Come back and set things right! The whole world is in a panic!

Hearing this, Sally too is in a panic. She runs one way, then the other.

SALLY
I've got to help Jack!

She runs off.

CUT TO:

INT. BOOGIE WOOGIE'S JAIL. CHRISTMAS EVE/SAME TIME.

Santa is behind bars, tied to a chair, in this dank, dripping, dark hell-hole that is Oogie Boogie's jail.

SANTA
(bellows)
OUT! LET ME OUT! I'VE GOT TO GET OUT OF HERE NOW! IT'S CHRISTMAS!!!

Lock, Shock & Barrel watch, giggling.

LOCK
You'd better be quiet, Sandy.

SHOCK
Maybe he doesn't know...

BARREL
He <u>has</u> to know...

LOCK
Everybody knows about--

He's interrupted by a FEARSOME GROANING (O.S.) All three of the little Trick or Treaters whip around at the sound.

LOCK, SHOCK & BARREL
Uh-oh.

They high-tail it out of there. Oogie Boogie is on his way...

>>>>> *OOGIE BOOGIE'S SONG.*

Oogie Boogie is an enormous shapeless sack, bulging with creepy-crawlies. He rolls and oozes rather than walks.

As Oogie Boogie's song concludes... a *SHAPELY FEMALE LEG* (that we recognize as Sally's), wearing a high, high heel and exposed up to the garter, eases seductively into view outside the jailhouse doorway.

When there isn't an immediate reaction, the toe taps impatiently.

Oogie hears...

OOGIE BOOGIE
Huh?

He turns and spots the beautifully turned leg. The leg kicks a can-can, once, twice...

OOGIE BOOGIE
Ooo la la...

He chuckles to himself and slathers. Relishing the anticipation, he rolls ever so slowly toward the enticement at the doorway... leaving his prisoner completely behind.

CUT TO:

EXT. OOGIE BOOGIE'S JAIL. CHRISTMAS EVE/SAME TIME.

Meantime, the REST OF SALLY hops on her remaining leg around the outside of Boogie's jail to the

BACK.

She peeks through the tiny, barred window to SEE

INSIDE

where Santa Claus bucks in his chair, desperate to escape.

SALLY
(whispers)
Sandy...

He whips around and is about to holler.

SALLY
(cuts him off before he can yell)
Ssh. I'm here to help you.

SANTA
(whispered with all the force of shouting)
Get me out of here!

Sally reaches in through the bars, straining to touch Santa Claus. He tries to move the chair toward her, but, try as he might, he can't. He is ready to burst with frustration.

SANTA
It's no use...

SALLY
You discourage too easily.
Just hang on.

She pulls off both her arms -- the left yanks the right out of the socket, popping the stitches, and the right yanks the left.

Santa swallows his scream of horror as Sally's unattached arms crawl through the bars and into the cell with him.

ONE ARM

scuttles to his ropes and begins picking at the knots while the

OTHER ARM

scoots out of the cell, behind Oogie Boogie -- who still oozes toward the leg at the door.

CUT TO:

EXT. MILITARY INSTALLATION. CHRISTMAS EVE/SAME TIME

The BIG GUNS fire into the night sky.

CUT TO:

EXT. STARRY, STARRY NIGHT. CHRISTMAS EVE/SAME TIME

Far below, the guns fire. Jack mistakes the artillery for fireworks.

JACK
Doesn't that look fun, Zero?!
They're celebrating! They're
thanking us for doing such a
good job!

Zero yaps happily and, nose in the air, swings gleefully back and forth in the harness at the head of the sleigh -- narrowly missing being blasted to smithereens by a well-guided MISSILE. It was only the exuberant swinging that saved him. His eyes goggle. He bristles mid-air and begins to flail.

JACK
(calls down)
Whoa! Careful down there, you guys! That was a pretty close shave!
(reassures Zero)
It's okay, boy... Head higher.

Zero regains control and flies up.

The explosions below blast on.

CUT TO:

INT. OOGIE BOOGIE'S JAIL. CHRISTMAS EVE/SAME TIME

Santa's own hands are now free, attacking the rest of the knots that bind him while Sally's stray hand picks the lock on the cell door. In a moment, he is free. In another moment, the door swings open.

Grabbing Sally's arm, Santa lumbers out the door toward freedom. Only Oogie Boogie himself stands in the way.

OOGIE BOOGIE

has just reached the door. Sally's crawling hand has almost reached him.

Making lascivious noises, Oogie Boogie peeks out to see what the body that belongs to such a gorgeous leg might possibly look like and is surprised to find nothing there... no body at all...

OOGIE BOOGIE
Huh?

It dawns on him that he's been had. Roaring, he wheels around -- only to see that Santa is loose and coming toward him. He roars louder and starts forward to set things right when...

SALLY'S HAND,

the one that had been tailing him, leaps up and pulls the end of a thread on the sack that is Oogie Boogie's shapeless body. The thread pulls out, LEAVING A GAPING OPENING IN OOGIE BOOGIE...

Oogie Boogie wails as

HIS GRUESOME CONTENTS IMMEDIATELY FLY, CRAWL, SLITHER, WRITHE, JUMP OUT. THE BAG ITSELF COLLAPSES TO THE GROUND, EMPTY. SILENT.

THE REST OF SALLY

-- torso, head, one leg -- hops into view from around the corner.

SANTA

grabs up Sally's arm still holding the string and is about to sweep up her other leg and the rest of her when there is a

SUDDEN ROAR

behind him -- OOGIE BOOGIE RETURNED TO LIFE. The empty bag opens up and with the SUCTION from hell SUCKS SANTA AND SALLY inside.

BLACK.

CUT TO:

EXT. STARRY, STARRY NIGHT. CHRISTMAS EVE/SAME TIME.

Jack and his ghostly team now frantically but successfully dodge a barrage of missiles... only in the next instant to suffer a DIRECT HIT and

EXPLODE!

The explosion is huge, fiery.

CUT TO:

EXT. HALLOWEENLAND. CHRISTMAS EVE/SAME TIME.

The explosion is being simulcast to the group of Halloween townspeople in the witches' cauldron.

They gape at the fireball in confusion and disbelief.

The Mayor turns away... ever the politician... his two faces compete to be the first to speak -- one of them wins.

MAYOR
I knew this Christmas thing was a bad idea... I had a feeling in my bones...

The Mayor climbs aboard his hearse and is driven off.

CUT TO:

EXT. STARRY, STARRY NIGHT. CHRISTMAS EVE/SAME TIME.

Clutching a burning bag of toys, Jack falls. He holds onto Zero -- who turns into a whimpering parachute.

Jack, voice choked, cries out in anguished sincerity:

JACK
Merry Christmas to all and to all a good night!

Jack lets go of Zero and plummets toward earth.

EXT. CEMETERY. CHRISTMAS EVE/CONTINUOUS TIME

Jack lands hard, bones clattering. Zero floats down beside him.

CUT TO:

INT. OOGIE BOOGIE'S JAIL. CHRISTMAS EVE/A LITTLE LATER.

Santa and Sally (more or less stuck together again) are cornered by Oogie Boogie -- he is in the process of snatching the escaped parts of himself out of the air and stuffing them back in.

OOGIE BOOGIE
Now what am I going to do with you two?

SALLY
You try anything and you just wait 'til Jack gets back.

THE MAYOR'S HEARSE passes (O.S.) -- blaring the announcement.

MAYOR'S AMPLIFIED VOICE (O.S.)
Jack has been blown to smithereens. Christmas is over. Skeleton Jack is no more...

Oogie Boogie chuckles. He leers at Sally.

OOGIE BOOGIE
You were saying?

He grabs a squiggly something and shoves it back into his sack.

CUT TO:

EXT. CEMETERY. CHRISTMAS EVE/CONTINUOUS ACTION.

For a long time, Jack doesn't move. He lies flat, sprawled face down across a couple of tombstones. Finally, he hauls himself up on a large stone cross.

JACK
(voice weak)
I thought I could be Santa. I thought I could be better than Santa. And what did I do instead? Instead I killed Christmas.

Crumpling, Jack weeps. Zero, ever faithful, makes himself a hankie and wipes Jack's wet eyes.

>>>>> *JACK'S SADDEST OF SAD SONGS.*

Jack sings as if his heart had broken in two. He is at his lowest of lows. Yet, being Jack, being irrepressibly buoyant, by the end of the song, he has completely worked himself back up from grief very nearly to exuberance -- he must save Santa! he must restore Christmas as it should be!

He opens a tombstone, lifting it up as easily as if it were the door to a storm cellar and, filled with determination, runs back down toward Halloweenland.

CUT TO:

INT. OOGIE BOOGIE'S JAIL. CHRISTMAS EVE/LATER.

Santa and Sally dangle perilously above a PIT. They've been bound and gagged and they writhe in terror.

From the murky depths below, SKELETON CROCODILES leap up at them, jaws snapping hungrily. Watching, Oogie Boogie snickers. He lowers Santa and Sally closer.

OOGIE BOOGIE
Scrawny ol' things -- they haven't eaten in centuries. I'd say it's about time we put some meat on their bones, don't you?

Suddenly, there's a

CRASH

behind him -- the crash of the door being kicked in.

And there stands

JACK.

JACK
I should say so.

Jack sweeps Boogie off his feet and holds him above the pit himself. Immediately, the terrorizer is terrified.

OOGIE BOOGIE
Jack! How great to see you. We were all worried about you. I was just giving our guests here a... a tour of the place. I told them it was dangerous, but they insisted on a closer look. What could I do?

He smiles sheepishly.

JACK
How about the whole show?

He dumps Oogie Boogie over the edge, but delicately keeps ahold of a choice thread.

AS HE FALLS, OOGIE BOOGIE UNRAVELS COMPLETELY.

His insides escape into the dark -- with the sounds of wings flapping and feet skittering -- and, IN THE END, ALL THAT'S LEFT OF HIS SHAPELESS SACK OF A BODY IS ONE LONG THREAD.

In the pit below, the crocodile skeletons scoot around, jaws clapping, having themselves a feast.

LATER,

Jack finishes untying Santa and Sally. He works quickly. He ungags Sally.

SALLY
(with glad relief)
We heard you'd been pulverized to bone dust.

JACK
For what I did, I deserve to be bone dust.

Jack looks away from Santa's angry gaze. He takes off Santa's cap and replaces it on Santa's head...

JACK
This is where it belongs... I was only trying to do a good job, but I made a real mess of everything. I'm sorry.

Cringing, he unties Santa's gag. Santa scowls and straightens his cap but, rather than chastise Jack, immediately makes for the door.

SANTA
No time to talk now... I've got to go fix Christmas!

Santa charges off.

CUT TO:

EXT. HALLOWEENLAND STREET. CHRISTMAS EVE/LATER.

Various townspeople duck out of the way to avoid Jack -- who has stopped to gaze up into the empty night sky. Zero floats beside him.

JACK
I hope it's not too late for him to set Christmas right.

Jack sighs and drags himself up the deserted street.

JACK
Well, Zero... I guess it's just you and me...
(the thought dawns)
...And Sally. She sure stuck by us, didn't she?

Downcast as he stalks along, Jack doesn't notice when it begins to

SNOW.

At first, just a few sparkling flakes fall.

VAMPIRE VOICE (O.S.)
Look!

BIG MONSTER VOICE (O.S.)
What is it?

It snows more and more.

WITCH VOICE (O.S.)
White things...

ANOTHER WITCH VOICE (O.S.)
Everywhere...

HIGH GHOUL VOICE (O.S.)
Could it be --

DEEP GHOUL VOICE (O.S.)
(finishes the thought)
-- *SNOW??*

Zero barks excitedly. Jack finally looks up.

JACK
(with wonder)
It is snow... But how?

As if in answer to Jack's question we HEAR

SANTA'S BOOMING HO-HO-HO

high up in the sky.

A SLOW SMILE SPREADS ACROSS JACK'S FACE.

The residents of Halloween come out to experience the snow -- this miracle of Christmas that has come to Halloween.

>>>>> *CELEBRATION SONG (ECHO OF 'WHAT'S THIS?'?)*

Jack joins in the celebration -- but seems always to be looking around for someone.

CUT TO:

EXT. CEMETERY. CHRISTMAS EVE/CONTINUOUS TIME

As the celebrating goes on in town below, Sally climbs Cemetery Hill. Sitting down at the top, she looks out at the round moon which shines behind the curtain of falling snow. She is moved to sing a brief reprise of

>>>>> *SALLY'S SONG*

Soon, A SECOND VOICE joins in, making the song a DUET. The second voice belongs to

JACK.

He has found Sally.

Jack sings:

JACK
My dearest friend, if you don't mind
I'd like to join you by your side
Let's sit together, you and I
Alone, where we can watch the sky.

He sits beside her. Together they look out at the moon and the snow.

WE PULL BACK AND UP:

Above the CLOUDS and the SNOW, past SANTA flying into the distance aboard his sleigh, above the gleaming light of the Christmas MOON, and into the NIGHT, pulling BACK AND BACK INTO THE STARS...

Santa's voice returns to narrate:

SANTA (V.O.)
And finally, everything worked out just fine --
Christmas was saved, though there wasn't much time.

But, after that night, things were never the same,
Each holiday now knew the other one's name.

And so when their long isolation had ended,
They cautiously reached out, and slowly befriended

And each shared a bit of the things that they had
With each other, and found out it wasn't so bad --

They had snowflakes in Halloween, those we could spare,
And we here in Christmas enjoyed a few scares.

The fireworks gave the Easter Bunnies a thrill
And St. Patrick's Day cherishes Easter Eggs still.

And though that one Christmas, things got out of hand,
I'm still rather fond of that skeleton man.

Though misguided I think his intentions were good.
He was just a poor skeleton misunderstood.

So many years later I thought I'd drop in,
And there was old Jack, still looking quite thin

With four or five skeleton children at hand
Playing strange little tunes in their xylophone band.

And I asked old Jack, 'Do you remember the night,
When the sky was so dark, and the moon shone so bright?

'When a million small children pretending to sleep
Nearly didn't have Christmas at all, so to speak?

'And would, if you could, turn that mighty clock back
To that long fateful night? Now, think carefully, Jack

'Would you do the whole thing all over again?
Knowing what you know now, knowing what you knew then?'

And he smiled like the old Pumpkin King that I knew,
Then turned, and asked softly of me... 'Wouldn't you?'

THE END